

John Henry Eaton to Andrew Jackson, November 20, 1818, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

JOHN H. EATON TO JACKSON.¹

¹ Eaton had just entered the Senate, in which he represented Tennessee till 1829; Secretary of War 1829–1831.

Senate Chamber, November 20, 1818

. I wrote you a hasty scrawl a few days since enclosing the message of the President; it is full upon the Florida question; and standing as a public and official document before the world justifying and defending every thing done by you in that quarter, cannot on your part be considered otherwise than satisfactory and calculated to lull all the strong murmurings of your enemies. It is true he does not alledge that your orders prohibited the course you pursued; nor indeed could he go so far, after having ordered a redelivery of the Province in contravention of the treaty of Pensacola; yet he declares it the only course you could have taken with a view to the object before you, founded in necessity, and warranted by the outrages of the savages who were exerted and urged on by the agents of Spain. The message certainly breaths strong hostility towards Spain; and points to rupture as strongly as the equivocal character of a modern state paper can. It is to me strange however if such be the end to which the President points, that he had not retained the posts untill the meeting of Congress, rather than to deliver them up, and then recommend a course which if adopted at once creates the necessity of retaking them

We have not yet gotten to business; a few days more will organise and arrange matters, and then something of bustle and noise may be expected. I am persuaded so far as I have

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data on which to found an opinion that Congress will be disposed to go farther than the message has done in relation to Florida The affair will be brought up, and every thing in regard to it fully elicited; for it is a matter seemingly of general interest Such is my opinion at present, tho yr. experience in legislative matters is sufficient to assure you how little is to be relied on conjectures as to what a deliberative assembly may do